











# THE PRISONER OF WAR:

A Comedy.

IN TWO ACTS.

BY

DOUGLAS JERROLD.

AUTHOR OF "THE RENT DAY," "BUBBLES OF THE DAY," ETC. ETC.

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PERFORMED AT

THE THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

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LONDON:

"HOW AND PARSONS, FLEET STREET.

MDCCLXII.

LONDON :  
BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.

<sup>TO</sup>

M R. AND MRS. KEELEY,

*IN TOKEN OF*

PROFESSIONAL ADMIRATION AND PRIVATE REGARD,

*This Comedy*

IS DEDICATED

*BY*

THEIR OBLIGED FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.



AFTER much negotiation, a treaty of peace was signed at Amiens, March 25, 1802; England agreeing to restore all her conquests, except Trinidad and the Dutch settlements in Ceylon. The peace, as Mr. Windham foretold, was no more than a truce. The English government, in order to check the inordinate ambition of Napoleon, sought the renewal of hostilities, and refused to restore Malta to the Knights of St. John: in this offending against the letter of the treaty. Discussion having proved useless, the Minister of England left Paris, March 12, 1803, and orders were issued for seizing the ships of France in the British ports. Buonaparte retaliated by detaining all the British subjects who were in France at the time.—*Russell's History of Modern Europe.*



CHARACTERS REPRESENTED.

—♦—

CAPTAIN CHANNEL	.	.	.	.	.	MR. PHELPS.
BASIL FIREBRACE	.	.	.	.	.	MR. ANDERSON.
PALLMALL	.	.	.	.	.	MR. KEELEY.
TOM HEYDAY	.	.	.	.	.	MR. HUDSON.
BEAVER	.	.	.	.	.	MR. BENNETT.
BOAZ	.	.	.	.	.	MR. BARNETT.
CHENILLE	.	.	.	.	.	MR. SELBY.
NICOLE	.	.	.	.	.	MR. YARNOLD.
CLARINA	.	.	.	.	.	MISS FORTESCUE.
POLLY PALLMALL	.	.	.	.	.	MRS. KEELEY.
MADAME LA ROSE	.	.	.	.	.	MRS. C. JONES.
MADAME VIOLETTE	.	.	.	.	.	MRS. SELBY.
BABETTE	.	.	.	.	.	MISS TURPIN.

SCENE—Verdun in France. Date, 1803.

*This Comedy was first represented Feb. 8, 1842.*



THE  
PRISONER OF WAR.

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ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Verdun. Outside of a Café.* Parties seated—some drinking, some playing at cards and dominos. NICOLE playing. As the curtain rises, the discharge of cannon is heard. All except NICOLE rise from their seats. Cannon continue firing. Enter BABETTE from Café.

BABETTE.

Eh, Messieurs, the guns! the guns!

NICOLE.

They tell nothing new, Babette; only another Englishman escaped.

FIRST FRENCHMAN.

And that promises a good reward to some of us. I'm for pursuit.

SECOND FRENCHMAN.

And I!

THIRD FRENCHMAN.

And I!

ALL (except NICOLE).

And I!

FIRST FRENCHMAN.

Nicole, remember; the first game is mine: only let me catch this Englishman, and when I've caught him, I'll double the stakes. *Vive la France!* down with the English, and the best luck to the lightest heels!

[*Exeunt all but NICOLE and BABETTE shouting, guns firing.*

BABETTE.

And for the honour of France, why doesn't Nicole show his heels too ?

NICOLE.

If all the English had escaped, I wouldn't bring 'em back to Verdun ; no, not if even whistling would do it. Since these sailor bull-dogs have been prisoners here, Verdun's no place for a Frenchman. Now, Babette, what can you see in these English ? They drink like swine, dance like bears, and—

BABETTE.

Make love like lions.

NICOLE.

Love ! Isn't there the greatest reason you should hate them ? Arn't they your foes ? Arn't you a Frenchwoman ?

BABETTE.

I always thought so—but Monsieur Pallmall says, he's sure there's some mistake.

NICOLE.

Monsieur Pallmall ! And if you might, you'd marry him ?

BABETTE.

Delightful ! and go and live in London !

NICOLE.

You live in Loudon ! A butterfly in a dark lantern. You in London ! Two Sundays there would kill you : and then the fogs.

BABETTE.

All scandal. Monsieur Pallmall, who was born and bred in London, says he never saw a fog till he came to France. Hear him talk of London.

NICOLE.

I have heard him. He'll swear that in London it hails lump-sugar, and rains rose-water ;—that violets grow at every door, and nightingales sing from every lamp. As I'm a Frenchman, I'll have revenge. This English calf, this Monsieur Pallmall, and that Monsieur Heyday, too ——

*Enter BOAZ.*

BOAZ.

Heyday ! My tear, tell me—he is not escaped—it is not Heyday ?

BABETTE.

Not he, Boaz, be sure on't. Monsieur Heyday fly from Verdun ! No, no, I'll answer for him.

BOAZ.

Vell, vell, ven I heard de guns, I had my fears. Ha !—de guns, my tear ! de guns ! Every von goes to my heart.

NICOLE.

To your heart?—to your pocket, you mean.

BOAZ.

And dat is vorser. Oh ! vot I lose by dese English dat run avay ! Vot I lose nobody knows. Friday night, dere vent fifty napoleons vid de rogue dey killed.

BABETTE.

Poor young fellow ! He was discovered crossing the moat, and shot by the sentinel. I'm sure I cried so when I heard of it.

BOAZ.

Cried ! Vot, did you lose fifty napoleons ? No ? Oh, my tear, you don't know what crying is.

NICOLE.

But, good Jew, if you lose so much by them, why do you lend money to these English ?

BOAZ.

Must employ my mind, ma tear.

[*Shouting without, and re-enter FRENCHMEN.*

FIRST FRENCHMAN.

Hurrah ! the bird's caught again.

BOAZ.

Caught ! Who is he ? What is he ?

## FIRST FRENCHMAN.

Caught before he was well off the perch. He fought like a devil, but a sabre cut settled him.

## BABETTE.

Killed !

## BOAZ.

Horrible ! shocking ! Murder ! (*taking out his memorandum-book*). Vot's his name ?

## SECOND FRENCHMAN.

I think they called him Smith.

## BOAZ.

Smith !—catch me ! I am tead !

## FIRST FRENCHMAN.

Yes, lieut~~enant~~ Sampson Smith. The Sampson I'll swear to.

BOAZ (*looking at book*).

I am better : my Smith is John.

## BABETTE.

Poor soul ! and is he really killed ?

## FIRST FRENCHMAN.

Killed ! Oh no, carved a little, nothing more. And now Nicole, for a second game.

## NICOLE.

Not I—a plague on these English dogs, say I ! They've spoilt Verdun.

*Enter PALLMALL.*

## PALLMALL.

Politeness, Monsieur Nicole, politeness to the captive. If we are dogs, can't you skin us and be civil ?

## BABETTE.

Oh, Monsieur Pallmall, never mind Nicole. Doesn't all Verdun love the dear prisoners, the charming English ?

## BOAZ.

Aren't all our houses open to you ?

## PALLMALL.

All. In Ireland, the pig pays the rent : in Verdun the pig's an Englishman. Oh, only to see how your housekeepers squabble for a lodger ! Such hospitality ! I was never so fought for by the women in all my life.

## BOAZ.

And isn't our pockets open to you, isn't my pocket open ?

## PALLMALL.

Open as a rat-trap : but I sha'n't nibble, Boaz. No, you don't toast cheese for me. As for the innocent sailors—the poor salt-water babes that you swallow like oysters, by the dozen—

## BOAZ.

Vot vould dey do vidout me ? Ven deir allowance is gone, vy den— .

## PALLMALL.

Gone ! It never comes : you pounce upon it by the way, like an old hawk on a carrier-pigeon.

## BOAZ.

Dey vill drink—dey vill gamble—poor tings—only to lose de time.

## PALLMALL.

And you'll be gambled with for tempting 'em, brave, unsuspecting fellows ! You'll be one of the devil's dice, depend on't.

## BOAZ.

Mister Mallpall ! Devil's dice !

## PALLMALL.

Listen. He'll find two rascally money-lenders—if he can—with as many spots upon them as yourself : and, on nights of chicken hazard, he'll rattle you all three together in a redhot dice-box. That's your fate.

## BOAZ.

Ha ! Mister Mallpall ! vot I do ish kindness. I have no profits—de taxes eats up all.

## BABETTE.

Yes, indeed—since the war, the taxes are dreadful.

PALLMALL.

All comes of being born in France—should live in England.

BABETTE.

What, have you never a tax in England?

PALLMALL.

We haven't the word in our language. There are two or three duties, to be sure; but then, with us, duties are pleasures. As for taxes, you'd make an Englishman stare only to mention such things.

BOAZ.

Indeed? ha! ha! charming place! Den vidout taxes how do you keep up de government?

PALLMALL.

Keep it up? Like an hour-glass: when one side's quite run out, we turn up the other and go on again.

BOAZ.

And nobody paid for turning, I suppose. Ha! ha! Vell, vell, good morning, Mr. Mallpall; and if ever you vant Boaz de Jew——

PALLMALL.

I want nothing. I'm a philosopher, and can play the flute. [Exit BOAZ into Café.

BABETTE.

That you can.

PALLMALL.

Or how should I get through my captivity? Half the morning I devote to "God save the King," while the afternoons I give to "Barney leave the girls alone."

BABETTE.

And I've remarked you never play any thing but those two tunes.

PALLMALL.

Never; and that on the finest patriotic principle.—*(Aside)* I don't know any other. [Exeunt into Café.

PALLMALL.

Brother to a beggar—without a shilling, without a hope !

HEYDAY.

Avast, Peter ! I'll not brag about the shillings ; but in the cockpit they let us have any allowance of hope. So haven't I hope and a sword ?

PALLMALL.

I'd rather you had a goose and a needle. Polly, if you marry there, you marry without a penny. In six months a cannon-ball may make you a midshipman's widow, and then how will you live ?

POLLY.

I shall not trouble you, sir. As a midshipman's widow, I shall live upon my pension.

PALLMALL.

Live upon your moonshine ! Home with you—home !

POLLY.

Now, Peter. (*Running towards FIREBRACE.*)

FIREBRACE.

Eh, my pretty countrywoman ! An Englishman ! and—what !—my old shipmate, Tom Heyday ?

HEYDAY.

Basil Firebrace—no, damn it !—I'm not glad to see you here. Well ! how are you ? Caught like the rest of us by Jean Crapaud ? Tell me—no—it can't be.—They've never had the impudence to take the old Invincible ?

FIREBRACE.

No, no, I left her, obtained my commission only six weeks since. 'Tis a long story, and will serve with our grog ; but the short of it is, a heavy gale and a lee shore. We ran hard aground ; the Frenchmen came down upon us,—we made fight, but 'twas hard work, fifty to one ; the end was, we were caught, and in a few days began our march to Verdun. I arrived this afternoon, showed to the commandant, obtained parole, and here, with heavy heart, though laughing face, Tom, here I am, prisoner of war.

## HEYDAY.

And here are three hundred of us, of no more service to Old England than a dead marine. Still things might have been worse ; for brandy's cheap, and the women doat upon us. So Basil, my boy, you shall laugh and drink, and—eh ! avast—you're lieutenant now, and Tom Heyday's but a reefer still.

## FIREBRACE.

My friend, Tom, my old, young friend, whatever I may be. A prisoner of war. Ha ! Tom, I've something at my heart, something that makes captivity bitter indeed.

## HEYDAY.

Captivity ! Humph ! 'tisn't a sweet draught, drink it from as fine a cup as we may ; but wry faces don't help it down ; so laugh, laugh and swallow. Here's an Englishman —a—a—philosopher.

## FIREBRACE.

Of what ship, sir ?

## PALLMALL.

What ship ? Of the London, sir ; an excellent ship ; fool that I was to quit her. I'd no watch to keep, feared no weather, ate when I liked, drank when I chose, took my own liberty days ; and, more than all, was my own purser.

## FIREBRACE.

I might have discovered as much—a sleek citizen caught on the wing by Buonaparte.

## POLLY.

And very shameful conduct of him.. They said peace was made, and all was comfortable, and so brother Peter and I thought we'd go to Paris for a week, just to learn the language, and look at the new bonnets.

## FIREBRACE.

A most commendable purpose.

## PALLMALL.

She says nothing of the smuggling ; but with her 'twas lace, not language. The peace of Amiens ! If ever I trust to any other peace of Buonaparte's making —

POLLY.

All your own fault—for still they might have let us live in Paris, but for that shocking habit of yours.

PALLMALL.

Patriotism, Polly, patriotism.

POLLY.

Patriotism ! Would you think it, sir ? he quarrelled with some French dragoons, because he would insist, that the best cocoa-nuts grew on Primrose-hill, and that birds of paradise flew about St. James's.

PALLMALL.

And wasn't that patriotism ? They abused the British climate, and I championed my native air. As a sailor, isn't it your duty to die for your country ?

FIREBRACE.

Most certainly.

PALLMALL.

As a civilian, 'tis mine to lie for her. Courage isn't confined to fighting. No, no—whenever a Frenchman throws me down a lie—for the honour of England, I always trump it.

POLLY.

Yes, brother ; but recollect, how very often you play the first card.

PALLMALL.

And if I do colour England up a little for these Frenchmen, after all, 'tis but a little; just a touch here, and a touch there.

FIREBRACE.

Take a sailor's advice, sir; don't colour at all. Where nature has done so well, there's little need of paint or patches.

POLLY.

What a lovely sentiment ! Why couldn't I think of it when Ma'amselle La Nymph wanted me to wear rouge ?

MADAME LA ROSE runs down the stage, followed by MADAME VIOLETTÉ.

MADAME LA ROSE.

Victoire ! Victoire ! dear Captain, victoire !

FIREBRACE.

What ! am I to consider myself disposed of ? And Madame La Rose , are you the fortunate possessor ?

MADAME LA ROSE.

I am that happy woman .

POLLY.

Well, if ever ! And has our landlady been playing cards for a lodger ?

PALLMALL.

Why not ? Though, considering the worth of an Englishman in this town , 'tis very high gambling .

POLLY.

Well ! I'm glad she has won , however .

MADAME LA ROSE.

( Giving card to FIREBRACE .) Our address , sir—we sup at nine ; we shall be so happy—you'll so doat upon Psyche .

FIREBRACE.

Psyche ! Is she handsome ?

MADAME LA ROSE.

Beautiful—and can do everything but speak .

FIREBRACE.

The perfection of a woman . Eh !—oh ! I see—ha ! ha ! the poodle .

MADAME LA ROSE.

The poodle . To say nothing of your next-door neighbour , such a nice old Englishman ! And he has a daughter who sings—

FIREBRACE.

Sings ? Humph ! and plays the piano with the window up , no doubt ? ( Aside .) I wish I had known that .

POLLY.

Oh , she plays beautiful ! The trebles , and the tenors , and the basses , all mixed up together , with such shaking !

FIREBRACE.

I know ; musketry , swivels , and heavy guns . ( Aside ) I'd rather have fallen to the cockatoo and monkey .

## HEYDAY.

And, Basil, you must keep a good look-out—all here, English and French, give chase to her. Such eyes for killing! Small-arms in the tops are as nothing to 'em.

## FIREBRACE.

(*Aside to him.*) Ha, Tom! I'll tell you a secret. 'Tis my faith, and I shall die in it, there is but one pair of eyes in all the world.

## HEYDAY.

What! captured, and taken in tow already? Then old Channel's girl—

## FIREBRACE.

Who? Channel? Captain Channel! The—the—don't speak—not a word—the Channel of—the Temeraire?

## HEYDAY.

Old Channel of the Temeraire.

## FIREBRACE.

He is not here!

## HEYDAY.

He was, half an hour since; for I saw him. He and his daughter are here. The old tar went to Paris, like other fools, in the peace. He made a run for it, but was taken with the girl on the coast. Here he is on parole, and here is Miss Clarina with him. What, Basil! why you're as white as a purser's clerk at the first broadside.

## FIREBRACE.

Not so, Tom. I—I—was but startled at the trick of fortune, the —ha! ha!—the chance of war, to bring us here—here together. (*Aside.*) My wife! my blessed one!

## HEYDAY.

Why, man, you tremble, and—

## FIREBRACE.

Tremble?—tut! I own I am astonished—delighted; ha! ha! yes, delighted; for I know old Channel—an excellent fellow. I must see him, and immediately.

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## HEYDAY.

He is now at the Café Impérial, here to the larboard.  
I'll take you there.

FIREBRACE (*to MADAME LA ROSE*).

And the captain is your neighbour—your next-door neighbour? And your house—it isn't far? No? I thought not. Bear up, then!

## HEYDAY.

But larboard lies the captain.

FIREBRACE.

Starboard the lodging. I must, you know, look at my lodging, must look at my berth, and after pay my respects to the captain. In this case, comfort first, and then duty. And so, in my eyes thou most lovely of landladies, having such a neighbour,—out reefs, and crowd sails for the harbour!

[*Exit with MADAME LA ROSE.*

## MADAME VIOLETTE.

His arm about her waist! I have had a most fortunate deliverance.

[*Exit MADAME VIOLETTE.*

## POLLY.

Ha! ha! how the lieutenant flies—and how he makes our little landlady fly too!

## PALLMALL.

And now they stop at Madame La Rose's door—and now—

## POLLY.

The lieutenant runs to the next house! Now he knocks, I'd swear it, a true lover's knock—and now—

## PALLMALL.

He's vanished, and the Frenchwoman twirls round and round, and lifts up her hands for her lodger. So, so: I think Captain Channel had better hasten home. If I see him, 'twill be neighbourly to hint as much.

## POLLY.

There again! Because you haven't the heart to fall in love yourself, you must spoil the little love of every body else; just like the boy who blabbed about the stolen apples, only because he hadn't the courage to go into the orchard.

HEYDAY.

Not so, Polly. Peter want courage! only ask Babette—ask her—

PALLMALL.

Nothing impertinent. If I do prattle with Babette, 'tis only for the sake of her French.

POLLY.

Her French ! ha ! ha ! ha !

PALLMALL.

I'm sure she has a delicious accent.

POLLY.

No doubt. I caught you taking it from her very lips only yesterday.

PALLMALL.

Polly Pallmall, I am your elder brother—and—and—in a word, no man makes a fool of himself, who is not justified by such folly, in preventing the rest of his family from following his example. So take my fraternal arm—come home; and to employ your mind, translate "Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded." As for this love nonsense, my friend, we shall be exchanged soon and go to London.

HEYDAY.

Go to London ! Then I wish you would do me this little favour; just call upon the lords of the admiralty, and tell 'em after fourteen years' service—for it must have slipped their memories—that Tom Heyday's only a midshipman still.

PALLMALL.

With pleasure; I promise it. And should their lordships condescend to take the hint, I shall be happy to see you—when they've made you rear-admiral. [Exeunt.

**SCENE II.—CAPTAIN CHANNEL's Lodgings.—CLARINA  
and FIREBRACE discovered.**

FIREBRACE.

Clarina, dear Clarina ! your voice—oh, it hath been with me in battle and in tempest !—let me hear it now—sweet love—dear wife !

CLARINA.

I did not think joy had so fierce a moment. Basil !—husband !

FIREBRACE.

That word ! husband ! It fills my heart with bliss—my eyes with tears. There—so—we must laugh now—laugh, love—laugh ! Hang it ! no—my heart's too full for laughter yet !

CLARINA.

This sudden happiness ! It makes me childish. I almost fear to quit your hand lest I should wake—as I have waked—from dreams, to find you gone.

FIREBRACE.

I have had my dreams too—dreamt with open eyes. Ha ! many a time have you walked the middle watch with me. When the sky was pitch, the wind a gale, and the sea mountains—then have you paced the deck with me—then have I felt you nestling at my arm—then have I looked into your loving eyes, and my heart has melted at your gentle voice.

CLARINA.

Was I so often with you ? Had you indeed such visions ?

FIREBRACE.

Or I had died of melancholy. If fancy did not sometimes cheat the sailor's heart with sounds and faces brought from home, the heart must break, be sure on't.

CLARINA.

I have so much to tell you !

FIREBRACE.

And you shall tell it—tell it again and again—and I'll listen as though I heard a mermaid sing. I will, by this

kiss ! Ha, wife ! now I look into your eyes, taste the sweetness of your lip, I know this is no shipboard fancy—no fading vision of the middle watch.

CLARINA.

And my own history told—all the hopes—the cares that—Hark !

FIREBRACE.

What alarms you, wife ?

CLARINA.

Oh that name !—so dear and yet so terrible !

FIREBRACE.

Terrible !

CLARINA.

I thought I heard my father's step; and the sound that should be music to a daughter's ear, struck to my heart reproach and terror.

FIREBRACE.

Even yet he knows not of our marriage ?

CLARINA.

No—though a hundred times I have been tortured to declare it.

FIREBRACE.

Tortured, and for me ! He suspects and persecutes you ?

CLARINA.

No. His love for me—I did not think it possible—increases with his years. So kind, so generous—to me so gentle ! There's not a day he does not call me his frank—his honest child ! And when he has heard of disobedience such as mine, he has caught me in his arms, and pitying the parent so deceived, with pride has called me his own true-hearted girl—his noble daughter. Was not this torture ?

FIREBRACE.

It must be ended—shall be.

CLARINA.

Not yet—I have your promise, Basil ?

FIRLBRACE.

Nay, my oath. You asked my promise. 'Twas your first bridal request; and in the gratitude of an exulting heart, I swore never to divulge our secret—you not consenting. I know the place—the time. Two years since—

CLARINA.

Two years this very day. Do you not recollect this dress? I have worn it only one day since we parted.

FIREBRACE.

I led you from the altar. At the church door took a husband's first—last kiss, and with a mournful, yet a hoping heart, departed for the ocean. I return—return upon my wedding day! a happy omen. So, no tears—no more tears, Clarina.

CLARINA.

Oh, Basil! my joy, my gratitude, to meet you still the same—

FIREBRACE.

Stay—I am not the same.

CLARINA.

No!

FIRLBRACE.

No—love has made me forget my dignity. I left a poor, almost hopeless midshipman—I return lieutenant. See—here's my commission; almost the only thing I've kept from Frenchmen's fingers. Here it is; and say—isn't not a pretty present for a wedding day? Yes—a lieutenant's lady. Fortune means nobly by us—or she had never brought me back at such a moment. I see it all! I shall soon get exchanged—the war continues—now lieutenant—soon commander—captain—admiral—a knighthood—an earldom and—yes, I see you at court—and myself, after some fifty years, honourably laid in Westminster Abbey. Ha! ha! what say you to the prospect, wife?

CLARINA.

Beautiful! though I hope, Basil, I may never see its termination.

FIREBRACE.

Nay, a sad look is ingratitude to fortune; so laugh, Clarina,

laugh; and remembering that you are now a lieutenant's wife, you shall tell the story of our disobedience; or rather, you shall let me tell it to your father, who will swear—storm—and then most heartily bless us. So not another tear, no—though 'twere worth a diamond. The captain is so noble—so generous—

*Enter CAPTAIN CHANNEL and BEAVER.*

CHANLL.

What's that of the captain? Come, youngster, don't make my girl blush with fine speeches about her father.

TIRLBRACE.

Dear sir—I am happy, rejoiced to see you.

CHANNL.

Then, sir—your happiness is devilish impudent; and you rejoice like a traitor. I am not happy to see you. No—it makes me unhappy to see another English face. I would I were the only Englishman here—yes, the Robinson Crusoe among the savages. Well—how are you, Basil—how are you, boy? Though I would rather you were at the devil than here, for you are a fine fellow: still, how are you?

TIRLBRACE.

Well, sir, well—and as happy as I can be in such a place

CHANLL.

So, you ran aground, eh? Tom Heyday's told me the yarn. Aground! what a beautiful world this would be, if it was all salt water. Still you had a fight for it—you weren't caught as I was, like an old woman in a shower, without her umbrella. Ugh! I must go to Paris!

CARINA.

Dear father, why this constant self-reproach?

CHANNEL.

No reproach at all, girl. I'm glad they caught me. I deserved it. I was an ass—a gull—a greenhorn, yes, green as a leek, at sixty. I now should have been upon my own beautiful quarter-deck, treating the rascals with grape and

canister—and here I am, doomed for my sins, to hear them crow over us, and to gulp their brandy. Wheugh! But I deserve it—I'm glad I've got it, glad—damned glad.

## FIREBRACE.

Why sir, I take it, time here must move heavily.

## CHANNEL.

Not at all, sir. Nothing moves heavily in France—here, Time himself is a dancing-master. No, never was better occupied—don't stare—never!

## FIREBRACE.

How, sir?

## CHANNEL.

How? In the first place, we make paper boats, and swim 'em in the gutter; then we teach the little boys to sing "Rule Britannia," and pay 'em for doing it; and then, when we want a long, loud, wholesome laugh—isn't there Buonaparte—good fellow! who writes his bulletins especially to amuse us? Besides this, don't they allow us cards and dice, that we may pick pockets without being hanged for it?

## FIREBRACE.

Truly, sir, the recreations are numerous.

## CHANNEL.

Yet I'll give you a little bit of advice. As you must employ your time, buy a parrot, and for the honour of your country, teach her every word of Magna Charta.

## FIREBRACE.

I acknowledge the patriotism of the task—but fear my merits as a schoolmaster.

## CHANNEL.

Above all—if you'd keep your parole, keep quiet. Else they've an ugly place they call the Fortress of Bîche, and to that they march you off, and when there, stow you in cells no bigger than stone bottles. Yes—Bîche is the word of terror here. Bîche—Bîche—everything Bîche. They'll send you there for only looking bilious, sneezing too loud, or even fighting with a handful of Frenchmen. Bîche—but I'll not swear.

## FIREBRACE.

Thanks for your counsel, sir. I hope to prove a most peaceful, exemplary prisoner.

## CHANNEL.

You always were a sensible, spirited fellow, and so was your father, whom I loved dearly. Yes, Basil, I know you are as incapable of senseless riot, as of the least falsehood, the slightest deceit. I've always said so to Clarina; haven't I, girl?

## CLARINA.

Yes, sir—yes. But, father, you have forgotten Mr. Beaver.

## CHANNEL.

Your pardon, Beaver—the truth is, I was so glad to see Basil. No—not glad—but you know what I'd say. Here, Basil. Mr. Beaver—an Englishman—a merchant. Beaver, my young friend Basil Firebrace. (*Aside to BASIL.*) An excellent fellow is Beaver: none of your fair-weather craft—but taut—trim, and sea-worthy—and—but this is a secret—devilish fond of Clarina. (*Aside to BEAVER.*) A noble lad, that Basil; if bullets spare him, he'll be admiral, depend on it.

## BEAVER.

(*To BASIL.*) Sir, 'twill be to me a happiness to make the friendship of one so honoured by the esteem of Captain Channel.

## FIREBRACE.

Sir—I—I—(*aside.*) Damn it! Why do I stammer at him? I—'twill give me pleasure, sir—to—to—

## CHANNEL.

There, that will do—you both know what you both mean. Well, Basil, only to think that we three should meet here prisoners! Do you recollect, you dog, two years ago, when you were at my little wigwam, just out of Yarmouth?

## FIREBRACE.

Recollect, sir!—It has formed the subject of my happiest remembrance.

BEAVER.

(Aside.) Has it so?

CHANNEL.

We were merry, to be sure ! I never was such a boy in all my life. Do you remember that evening, when I'd the gout, when you wagered I couldn't go aloft in the apple-tree ?

FIREBRACE.

To be sure, sir—ha ! ha !

CHANNEL.

I laid I could, and I sent you and Clary round the walk into the paddock to see me come out perched upon the truck of it ; and, you dog, don't you remember—ha ! ha ! how I pelted you with pippins, that you were both glad to run away, and hide yourselves, eh ? Well ; we were merry then. When your leave was up, and you went aboard, I'm sure I missed you ; and for Clary here—I don't know how it was, but she was as dull as a dog-fish.

BEAVER.

(Aside.) Indeed ?

[Drums heard in the street, beating the retreat.]

FIREBRACE.

What's that ?

CHANNEL.

That ! That means, all of us must go to bed, or seem to go to bed. That's their evening hymn upon parchment. Od's, Basil ! have you secured a berth ?

FIREBRACE.

Yes, sir ; I had forgotten to say, I am your next-door neighbour.

CHANNEL.

What, one of the chickens to be picked by Madame La Rose ? Not that she's the worst of 'em. Next door, eh ?

FIREBRACE.

Yes, sir ; my window, as my landlady tells me, is the left one, looking into your garden.

CHANNEL.

Why, you and Beaver will be messmates, then. He's aboard that ship too.

BEAVER.

And most happy that it has fallen so. I trust we shall soon be fast friends.

FIREBRACE.

I hope so.

CHANNEL.

There, belay fine speeches, and—but here comes your she-captain, purser, and all.

*Enter MADAME LA ROSE.*

MADAME LA ROSE.

A million pardons, sweet lieutenant.

FIREBRACE.

(*Aside.*) Lieutenant! Now she has secured me, she drops the captain.

MADAME LA ROSE.

A million pardons—supper smokes.

CHANNEL.

Then, good night. There, go like good boys; and mind, I shall have an eye upon you both. (*Aside to BEAVER.*) When they are all turned in, come back. I'll have the door left on the latch, and then we'll finish our chess. Good night. Come, shake hands with Clarina, both of you.

BEAVER.

(*Approaching CLARINA.*) Fair lady, the sweetest rest attend you.

FIREBRACE.

(*To CLARINA.*) Good night; good—(*aside*) the words choke me (*aside to her.*) The window to the left. Good night, madam; good—

CHANNEL.

There, that will do. Good night, Madame La Rose—good night, all.

[*The drums beat under the window.* CHANNEL leads CLARINA to her chamber. MADAME LA ROSE awaits BASIL and BEAVER, who enter with ceremony, bowing to CLARINA.

SCENE III.—*An Apartment in the House of MADAME LA ROSE. Table laid for supper. Folding-doors, and view of garden at back—Moonlight. Discovered at table, MADAME LA ROSE, BEAVER, PALLMALL, CHENILLE, POLLY PALMALL and others. MONSIEUR LA ROSE waiting.*

MADAME LA ROSE.

Themistocles.

MONSILUR LA ROSE.

Here, wife.

MADAME LA ROSE.

Wife! Some salt.

CHENILLE.

Monsieur La Rose, this fricandeau of yours is worthy of a statue, *parole d'honneur!*

PALLMALL.

Delicious, Monsieur La Rose. I shall never look on veal again, dead or alive, without thinking of you.

CHENILLE.

And for the sauce, a man might eat his own death-warrant with it—*Parole d'honneur!*

POLLY.

Oh, Mr. Rose, I never did taste such rabbits; they are quite duck.

MADAME LA ROSE.

Messieurs—Ma'amselle—don't, you'll turn the poor man's brain.

CHENILLE.

The fricandeau is divine—the rabbits superb; but I pity you English, you never tasted Monsieur's own dish—his *consommé de grenouilles*; once eat it, and you'd make your will, and die happy—*Parole d'honneur!*

PALLMALL.

(*Aside.*) This won't do; must trump him. Pooh! it's nothing; and as for pity—I pity you French. Talk of *consommé de grenouilles*, did you ever taste our *habeas corpus*? Nor you? Nor you? No! Ha!

MONSIEUR LA ROSE.

In the first place, there is our beautiful little frog—

PALLMALL.

Little frog ! Pooh ! In England the frogs are as big as beavers ; ar'n't they, sir ?

BEAVER.

Possibly ; I am no naturalist.

PALLMALL.

Quite as big ; and twice as sagacious.

CHENILLE.

(To PALLMALL, rising.) *Parole d'honneur ?*

PALLMALL.

(Rising.) *Parole d'honneur !*

MADAME LA ROSE.

But where's the lieutenant ? He won't take anything—he can't have gone to bed. Themistocles, run up stairs, and—Oh ! I'm in such raptures ; here he comes.

Enter FIREBRACE.

Themistocles, a chair. My dear lieutenant—Themistocles, the fricandeau !

POLLY.

Won't the lieutenant try the rabbits ?

FIREBRACE.

Thanks—thanks ; I thought I was hungry as an ogre, but have somehow lost all appetite ; 'tis the—the air of Verdun, I believe.

CHENILLE.

Beautiful air, Monsieur. No such air in the whole world—*Parole d'honneur !*

PALLMALL.

Pooh ! nothing to the air of England. That goes ten times as far—it must, you know, for it's ten times as thick.

FIREBRACE.

Ha ! ha ! well said, countryman. But, gentlemen, some wine ; a toast with it. Here's a speedy exchange, or a speedy peace !

CHENILLE.

Ha, Messieurs, isn't that magnificent Bordeaux ?

PALLMALI.

Very well for France ; but you should taste our London Bordeaux.

FIREBRACE.

(*Aside.*) I have watched—yet no sign—no sound There sits my rival ! The thought turns my blood to flame.

BLAVER (*to FIREBRACE*).

You have known the captain some years ?

FIREBRACE

(*Aside.*) Yet has he not dared to speak to her. No !—of that I am assured.

BLAVER.

I was observing, sir—

FIREBRACE.

Your pardon my thoughts were absent

BEAVER.

—That the captain was no recent friend.

FIREBRACE.

I have known him, need I say loved him, since my boyhood. My father died in battle in his arms ; the memory of such events draws hearts together with a triple cord.

BEAVER.

The—the young lady is handsome ?

FIREBRACE.

It is her least praise.

BEAVER

Accomplished too ?

FIREBRACE.

The world allows it.

BEAVER.

And her heart, I doubt not, is—

FIREBRACE.

Pure and priceless as a star in heaven.

BEAVER.

Oh, sir ! I perceive in female excellence you are an enthusiast.

FIREBRACE.

I hope so, for I had a mother,

BEAVER.

(*Aside.*) Subtly turned—yet I'll tempt him further. The lady will make an admirable wife ?

FIREBRACE.

Sir, there is no man worthy of her.

BEAVER.

Indeed ! Truly tis pitiful that a young lady, from her very excellence, should live and die unpaired, like phoenix.

FIREBRACE.

(*Aside.*) There's a damned meaning in his sneer.

BEAVER.

Pity that some man, expressly fashioned for the wonder, had not been vouchsafed us, if only for the sake of this dull wicked world, to multiply examples.

FIREBRACE.

Sir, you have chosen a theme—

[ *The sound of a harp is heard.*

BLAVER.

Hush ! the lady plays.

FIREBRACE.

(*Aside.*) It is her hand. It plucks my heart-strings.  
 (*CLARINA is heard to sing without.*

The dove 's in the bough, and the lark 's in the corn,  
 And folded to rest are the lilies of morn ;  
 In balm falls the dew, and the moon's tender light  
 Robes upland and valley ; good night, love, good night !

MAD. LA ROSE, CHENILLE, and others have in the course of the foregoing dialogue gone off.

POLLY.

There ! a love song—moonlight and all ! Isn't it like a novel ?

(FIREBRACE, who has during the song retired up the stage, goes off through the folding-doors.)

BEAVER.

(*Aside.*) He steals to the garden, led by heart and ears. I have no moment to lose ; the father's promise once secured, she's mine irrevocably. [Exit.

POLLY.

Music and moonlight ! They always make me feel quite foolish.

PALLMALL.

(Who continues eating.) An excellent fricandeau —for France —to be sure.

POLLY.

(In abstraction, PALLMALL not attending to her.) Oh, Tom Heyday ! I feel now that I could go and sit in one of those arbours, and looking at the moon, with a white handkerchief in one hand and a romance under my elbow, weep deliciously.—Ah ! Tom Heyday ! I shall never sleep comfortably if I don't first go and cry a little under that willow-tree. [Going towards garden.

\* PALLMALL.

Polly, where are you going ?

POLLY.

Going to hear the nightingale.

PALLMALL.

She's hoarse and doesn't sing to-night ; so go to bed.

POLLY.

Peter, you have no sentiment, no respect for melancholy.

PALLMALL.

Respect ! If I was to take off my hat to all your blue devils, I should never be covered. To bed with you—I like to hear the nightingale myself, between the sheets.

## POLLY.

Stars ! flowers ! dew-drops ! moonlight and a lover  
kneeling ! ah, Peter ! that's real poetry.

## PALLMALL.

Real rheumatism, if the gentleman kneels long. Bed,  
Polly, bed.

## POLLY.

And then, with faithful ring-doves cooing from a bush  
(*screams*). Oh, Peter !

PALLMALL (*rising*).

What's the matter ?

## POLLY.

It's a—a spasm. (*Aside*) 'Tis the lieutenant !

## PALLMALL.

Spasm ! I knew how 'twould be : it's those rabbits.

## POLLY.

Rabbits ! unromantic fellow ! Your vulgarity, Peter,  
would kill a whole circulating library. Oh ! another stitch !  
(*Aside*) Well, if he isn't trying to climb the wall !

## PALLMALL.

It's the moon—she plays the devil with stitches ; so, to  
bed.

**MONS. LA ROSE** and **SERVANT** come on at back and close  
doors and windows.

## POLLY.

(*Aside.*) They're locking the door—shutting the windows.  
If the lieutenant wanted to come in, he'd knock. An ap-  
pointment ! that's real love. I sha'n't sleep a wink for  
thinking of 'em.

## PALLMALL.

To bed, Polly,—I say, to bed. (*Offering her a light which  
he has taken from M. LA ROSE*).

## POLLY.

(*Aside.*) How he'll swear, and how she'll believe him !

## PALLMALL.

Bed—bed—bed !

## POLLY.

Bed ! (*snatches candlestick from him.*) But you'll not be my tyrant always. Bed ! No, I shall be married some day, and when I am once married—I'll never—no, I'll never go to bed. Hark ! (*The harp is heard, and CLARINA sings without.*)

Thy heart, may it waken to peace, like the dove ;  
Like the lark, may it offer its gladness above ;  
And lilies, that open their treasures of white,  
Resemble thy fortune ; good night, love, good night !

[PALLMALL and POLLY *exeunt as verse concludes.*..

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

## ACT II.

**SCENE I.—CAPTAIN CHANNEL's Apartments.** *Garden seen from window. BEAVER discovered at window.*

BEAVER.

The love-bird has ceased her ditty. I have heard her sing a hundred times—yet never as to-night, her heart gushed with her voice. 'Twas to him she sang—to him! What curse of fortune is upon me to bring them, and so strangely, together! If she can be mine with peace, with honour, well;—if not, there's nought that brain can plan, or heart can execute, shall stay me. (*Looking from window.*) Ha! he's there! By heavens, beneath her window! The moon streams full upon him. With what assured looks he gazes upwards!—her hand! she leans from out the casement!—She, who seemed the very soul of meekness, she—with frozen, nun-like looks and lips of virgin wax! She!—oh, woman!

*Enter CHANNEL carrying a chess-board*

CHANNEL.

Here 'tis, as we left the game last night.

BEAVER.

(*Abstractedly.*) Clouds swim before the moon—and now—

CHANNEL.

Swim before the moon! Beaver,—why man, are you writing a sonnet?

BEAVER.

The—the beauty of the night, sir—I—

CHANNEL.

When I was first in love, I tried that sort of jingle myself. I got as far as "Oh moon," and there I let go the anchor.

BEAVER.

Your first love, sir? (*Aside, looking towards window.*) Now I see him not. Your first love, sir?

CHANNEL.

As I thought it. Ha! ha! I was then a midshipman of eighteen, and when I first left Plymouth Nancy, there was only one thing that kept me from drowning myself.

BEAVER.

Indeed, sir, and what was that?

CHANNEL.

I tumbled overboard by accident, and didn't like the sensation. At last I was quite cured of my love for Nancy; and who do you think cured me?—why a Jew slop-seller with red hair.

BEAVER.

How, sir?

CHANNEL.

How? he married her; ha! ha!—Come, Beaver, now for our hard fought game. (*They sit*) Ha! Mr. Beaver, this is kind of you to humour an old sailor; it helps me through the night, for I can't sleep. I, who could have snored afloat upon a hen-coop, can't close my eyes in this—but all's one—here am I—there are you. 'Tis your move, play.

BEAVER.

How exquisitely Clarina sang to-night!

CHANNEL.

Why the wench can twitter—but that's not chess.

BEAVER.

(*Plays.*) There, sir! Did you mark the words of the song?

CHANNEL.

Something about good-night, though I doubt if she's in bed yet. I don't know how it is, but for these last two years she sits up reading half the night.

BEAVER.

(*Plays ~~carelessly~~.*) Reading at this very hour, no doubt. Her health may suffer.

## CHANNEL.

Humph ! Ha ! the queen is—hang chess ! a cabin-boy might beat me to-night. Beaver, plain-dealing is my creed ; and I think just now, there's something at both our hearts, of greater moment than these bits of ivory.

## BEAVER.

Rightly divined, sir—at mine, believe me.

## CHANNEL.

Clarina, eh ? Well I have been faithful to you. I've never said a syllable about you, but you're safe there, depend on't.

## BEAVER.

Forgive my passionate fears, but if another has awakened in her heart the—

## CHANNEL.

Another ! who could he be ? You are the only man, I may say, she has seen.

## BEAVER.

Was not Lieutenant Firebrace once your guest ?

## CHANNEL.

What ! Basil ? ha ! ha ! then a boy—a lad, who I believe thought more of the strawberry beds than anything beside. From the hour he left us till this morning, I never heard Clary utter his name—so 'tis plain what she thinks of him. No, Basil has taken my advice, and will never marry before he's captain.

## BEAVER.

And yet, sir—

## CHANNEL.

Yet ! If you were in the church—the ring upon her finger, and the last word said—would you cease your *yets* then ?

## BEAVER.

Oh, sir ! that moment !

## CHANNEL.

That moment shall come next week.—There's my hand upon it. She shall know my wish in the morning, and you shall get her consent in the afternoon.

THE PRISONER OF WAR.

BEAVER.

...ould she refuse me?

CHANNEL.

There again! Clarina refuse when I bid her! She!—bless her! she'd leap from the maintop-gallant-yard, if I did but raise my finger. Even though she never thought of it, she'd take matrimony as she would take physic, at my simple bidding. Hark! (approaching CLARINA'S door). Why, the slut! she's not in bed yet.

BEAVER.

Sure I heard a voice! (aside.) Can it be he?

CHANNEL.

(Listening at door.) Reading—reading, loud as a ship's chaplain.

BEAVER.

(Aside.) Can he be there? No—impossible. Are you certain 'tis your daughter?

CHANNEL.

Certain? ha! ha! Who should it be? Beaver, I'll tell you what; I'll punish her for this, and more, I'll have this business off my head before I sleep (knocks at chamber door).

BEAVER.

What would you do, sir?

CHANNEL.

Do! take her books from her; send her to bed, and bid her think of marriage. I say I will. Stand aside: I'll call you when you're wanted. (Knocks at door.) Clarina!

BEAVER.

(Aside.) And now all's hushed.

CHANNEL.

Silent! Humph! she thinks to cheat me. Clarina, I must—I will see you. Clarina, I say! Clarina!

Enter CLARINA from room. She stands at the door. BEAVER retires into the balcony.

CLARINA.

Father, dear father—

CHANNEL.

Caught, caught ! so confess.

CLARINA.

Confess ! Oh, sir !

CHANNEL.

Nay, your guilt is plain. In your eyes, your cheeks, I  
read your disobedience.

CLARINA.

(Falls at his feet.) Mercy, mercy, and forgive me.

CHANNEL.

(Raising her.) Why, Clarina, girl ! I am not angry with  
you,—that is, not very angry. (Aside) What an old sea-  
dog am I, to scare her thus !—My child, my dear girl—kiss  
me, Clarina—you little jade, you've been crying : don't  
deny it—you have. There aren't real tears enough in this  
world—real, scalding, bitter tears from breaking hearts, but  
we must have a parcel of lying books, to make people cry  
double.

CLARINA.

(Aside.) Books ! my secret then is safe. Pardon, dear  
father, I have indeed been disobedient.

CHANNEL.

Now, what idle novel can have kept you from your bed ?  
But why do I ask ? when all novels are alike ; made as they  
mix plum-puddings, only with one you've a little more  
spice, and with the other a little more brandy. Come, sit  
and tell me all about it. 'Twas a love-story, of course, that  
occupied you ?

CLARINA.

Yes.

CHANNEL.

Ha ! and the hero ? Was he a cut-throat, or only a pick-  
pocket—an amiable barley-sugar ruffian, or a magnanimous  
rose-coloured house-breaker ? When I was young, girls  
used to read Pilgrim's Progress, Jeremy Taylor, and such  
books of innocence ; now, young ladies know the ways of  
Newgate as well as the turnkeys. Then, books gave girls

hearty, healthy food ; now, silly things, like larks in cages, they live upon hemp-seed. Well—the story of the book in that room ?

CLARINA.

It is a sad one.—The heroine is most unhappy.

CHANNEL.

That's usual.

CLARINA.

For she has been disobedient.

CHANNFL.

That's nothing; for her father's a tyrant, a brute of course.

CLARINA.

The best, the noblest, kindest parent !

CHANNEL.

Come, that's civil of the writer ; he's not often so considerate. Fathers in novels are generally dragons in white wigs. Well, the girl ?

CLARINA.

She is married.

CHANNFL.

What ! unknown to her father, and he you say so kind, so good ?

CLARINA.

Her lover was her father's friend, his youthful friend, loved, assisted by him.

CHANNEL.

And the young gentleman, out of pure gratitude, makes a fool of the daughter—the scoundrel ! How was the girl smitten ? As they kill partridges, at first sight ?

CLARINA.

The lover was invited to her father's house. When his duties called him thence, 'twas then she felt the ties that bound her ; 'twas then she felt the sweet and bitter grief of early love—of love nurtured in secret and deceit. In one passionate moment, forgetful of her duty as a daughter, heedless of him, whose every glance was affection, whose every word was doting, she cast away the memories of her child-

hood, the gratitude, the respect of youth, and became a wife—a wretched wife.

CHANNEL.

So ! the villain who betrayed her duty, turned her tyrant ?

CLARINA.

No ; for years she never saw him ; from the day she called him husband.

CHANNEL.

Why then wretched ?

CLARINA.

She still dwelt with her father. The sense of her hypocrisy, like a lingering poison, wore her ; and the daily blessing of her father, that should have fallen like balm upon her, self-reproach did turn to blighting and a curse.

CHANNEL.

Poor thing ! but she deserved to suffer. Well, and the husband ? He returned ?

CLARINA.

He did.

CHANNEL.

And the father of his own sagacity discovered the match ?

CLARINA.

Once—they were together—such discovery was nearly made.

CHANNEL.

Ha ! and the end of the story ?

CLARINA.

The end ? It is not yet accomplished.

CHANNEL.

Yes, I see ; there you turned down the page when I interrupted you. But I can tell the end of it. Oh yes, the young couple go upon their knees, the father swears a little, then takes out his pocket handkerchief, wipes his eyes, and forgives them.

CLARINA.

Is such the ending ? dear father, can you promise it ?

CHANNEL..

To be sure I can, as well as if I had written it. Don't all novels end so? But if I were the father—

CLARINA.

You—the—the—father? Yes, sir?

CHANNEL.

I would first shoot the scoundrel who had betrayed my confidence, and for the girl—but I can't think of it! What! a creature, that one's heart is centred in—to think her the dwelling-place of honesty, the very shrine of truth, and then to find a cozening gipsy there, a smiling falsehood, a household wickedness!

CLARINA.

Father, spare her!

[Is about to sink in chair, CHANNEL supports her.

CHANNEL.

Foolish wench! why, if 'twere yourself you could hardly feel more than for your paper heroine; a mere thing of goose-quill and foolscap; only born in a garret to be buried in a trunk. I'll engage your sympathies for a worthier object. What think you of a real husband?

CLARINA.

A husband?

CHANNEL.

'Tis a somewhat unseasonable hour to talk for the first time of such a person; but if young ladies care not to sit up half the night with lovers lent from the library—why, as I say, a real husband can't be an unwelcome intruder among such shadowy company. I say, a husband.

CLARINA.

In truth, sir, I—I cannot guess your meaning. . .

CHANNEL.

No? Mr. Beaver's a good-looking fellow, isn't he?

CLARINA.

He is your friend, sir.

CHANNEL.

And—what I should think not the worst recommendation to a young lady—he loves you very dearly.

CLARINA.

He! Oh, impossible!

CHANNEL.

Clarina, this is unworthy of you. You are no coquet: you have seen, must have marked this. Briefly, Mr. Beaver has my consent to marry you.

CLARINA.

It cannot be—call it back, sir—I entreat, implore you.—By the deep love you bear me, by all the fondness, the undeserved fondness you have shown me, call back your word—it cannot, cannot be.

CHANNEL.

Cannot! Clarina, you know my temper. Though you have felt it not, you know its resolution. Answer me and promise. Stubborn! silent! Humph! Those pestilent books! 'Tis they have turned obedience into folly—have changed a kind, complying, dutious child to—but at least I'll stay that mischief—they shall to the flames.

*[Is proceeding to CLARINA's chamber when she throws herself before him.]*

CLARINA.

Father! You must not—do not—do not!

CHANNEL.

You promise, then?

CLARINA.

To-morrow, give me till to-morrow. (*Aside*) I saw him—still he lingers.

CHANNEL.

That's reasonable; be it so, to-morrow. How now, you're pale and—

CLARINA.

The next room, dear father; there the air is freer—the—'tis nothing, I shall be well and suddenly.

CHANNEL.

Dear girl, my heart is set on this—'tis now my only care. Think you I could leave you in this rough, this wily world? No; you'll spare my death-bed that pang. I

know you will, and so you'll promise—yes, my own good girl, you'll promise?

[Exit, leading CLARINA. BEAVER has watched part of the scene from the balcony. FIRFBRACE appears at door of CLARINA's chamber. He approaches BEAVER, who is about to exit.

FIREBRACE.

Stay.

BEAVER.

You, sir! Here!

FIRFBRACE.

The astonishment is poorly counterfeited. You have watched me.

BEAVER.

Watched?

FIREBRACE.

Ay, sir, I marked you,—watched me! 'Twas a manly office, and must be rewarded. I was about to quit yon chamber. I marked you, crouching like a hound—and your eye flashed with triumph as it encountered mine—it fixed me here. I wait your questioning

BEAVER.

Mine? Truly, sir, I have nought to ask—nought to observe.

FIREBRACE.

Then, sir, 'tis you must be the hearer. The morning breaks apace. In one hour my friend shall seek you.

BEAVER.

What wrong have I to answer?

FIRFBRACE.

You have dared to act the spy upon my doings—you have dared in thought to stain a woman's spotless fame—you would intrude yourself within the very sanctuary of her soul—to make a lie, a scandal on her honour.

BEAVER.

Wherefore am I censurable? Blame you the man of gold who guards his chest, the man made princely by some precious gem, who watches with a jealous eye the jewel that enriches him? The lady's father has transferred her, sir, to me. You smile.

## FIREBRACE.

I must. Transferred! It is a jest almost for Plutus. I hear you are a man of commerce. You think a woman's heart a pack of goods, a thing of transfer. See you that star now fading in the light of morning? Make that a matter of exchange; book it in your ledger; barter it from east to west, from north to south: of heaven's beauty make an earthly bargain, and when you have transferred that star, have given full possession of its glory, why, then we'll talk of woman's heart, its market price, its rate of change, its rule of barter.

## BEAVER.

A prosperous rival! Yes, I see my fate. I may hang myself upon the next willow.

## FIREBRACE.

Sir, you have my free consent to that immediate operation.

## BEAVER.

Still vanity assist me! I'll not despair. Here comes the lady's father—will you remain and hear the gentleman?

FIREBRACE (*going towards chamber*).

Fear not, sir, I will await him—await you.

## BEAVER.

And in that chamber?

## FIREBRACE.

Even there.

[*Exit into chamber.*

## BEAVER.

At least I may revenge this triumph.

*Enter CHANNEL.*

## CHANNEL.

Beaver, give me your hand—'tis certain, fixed. There was a little coyness at first, a few water-drops, but now you're a happy man.

## BEAVER.

Am I indeed, sir?

## CHANNEL.

I tell you so, and—why, you hear me talk of your happiness, and yet look as if I preached a funeral sermon.

BEAVER.

Truly, sir, I fear my happiness at the present moment needs some such sad discourse. I have a friend, a new friend, who has awakened these doubts. He has forbidden me to hope the happiness you promise me.

CHANNEL.

Has he? Then I should like to look upon your friend's brazen countenance.

[FIREBRACE appears at chamber-door.

BEAVER.

Will you pardon me? I have admitted him here to satisfy you.

CHANNEL.

Where?

BEAVER.

There.

CHANNEL.

Basil! Well, sir, what have you to say of my daughter? What.

BEAVER.

The gentleman may wish for privacy: I will at hand await you.—(Aside) The storm will burst; be it my care to profit by the tempest. Chenille's on guard to-night: he shall be at hand to stay, yes, to stay the mischief. [Exit.

• CHANNEL.

Now, Lieutenant Firebrace—and first let me repair the neglect of last night, and congratulate you upon your promotion. You have climbed early, sir.

FIREBRACE.

Nor may I forget the counsel that taught me best to climb.

CHANNEL.

Well, sir, my friend, my excellent friend, Beaver tells me you have forbidden him to hope for my daughter.

FIREBRACE.

'Tis very true, sir.

CHANNEL.

May I, as merely the father of the lady, ask why?

FIREBRACE.

She cannot wed him.

CHANNEL.

Indeed! Do you know any reason to forbid the banns?

FIREBRACE.

The best—she cannot love him.

CHANNEL.

Lieutenant Firebrace—Basil—I have loved you very dearly—I think I have shown it better than by talking about it. Now, look in my face—look where your father looked for the last time, and tell me, are you a scoundrel?

FIREBRACE.

No! Nor lives there but one man, who with safety, though he were high admiral, might put such word to me.

CHANNEL.

You are not a scoundrel? Your hand—forgive me, Basil; I began to have my doubts.

FIREBRACE.

And wherefore?

CHANNEL.

No, no, I wronged you—I—no,—'tis impossible. You could not, with fair-weather looks and lying words, betray an old man's friendship. You are what I have ever thought you, the son of honour—a frank, noble, generous lad.

FIREBRACE. \*

Spare your commendation and hear me. I love Clarina.

CHANNEL.

I'm sorry for it. You speak too late. She marries Mr. Beaver. You look incredulous. Who shall prevent Clarina's marriage?

FIREBRACE.

Clarina's plighted heart.

CHANNEL.

Plighted—to you! Is it so? Basil Firebrace, you have abused my confidence, with basest fraud destroyed my faith in one whose truth was to me as a religion. A smiling thief I welcomed to my hearth has stolen the duty of

my child—the quiet of her father. (*Enter CLARINA.*—  
*CHANNEL goes to cabinet and takes out pistol.*) I am an old  
 man, sir, but not too old to chastise ingratitude. Follow  
 me, sir.

CLARINA. .

Father !

CHANNEL.

Clarina ! Yes, the same look of innocence—the same face,  
 and yet a hypocrite !

CLARINA.

Forgive me !

CHANNEL.

What a dupe hath my fondness—my unbounded confidence—now I read it all ! the tale you feigned to-night—the story of the book—'twas your own story !

CLARINA.

Mercy !

CHANNEL.

That man—he was there—in your chamber ? Silent !  
 Guilty ! Villain, thus I destroy—

[*CHANNEL presents pistol at FIREBRACE. CLARINA throws herself before him.*

CLARINA.

My husband !

*Enter CHENILLE and several gendarmes.*

CHENILLE.

What's this ? Brawling, and it may be, murder ? Soldiers, your duty : conduct these gentlemen to the fortress.  
 (Aside.) And thence, or I know little of the governor, to Biche.

CLARINA.

Father !

CHANNEL.

Anywhere, so I no longer look on disobedience.

[*Exit CHANNEL, preceded by two gendarmes.*

## CLARINA.

Basil! Husband! They will send you hence, far hence, amidst all that makes captivity most terrible.

## FIREBRACE.

Never think it. The story of this passing quarrel told, we shall be free, be sure of it. So smile, wife! Wife! how sweeter still the word, since to the world I now may utter it! I will not say farewell; for soon, my heart assures me, we again shall meet.

[Exit, followed by two gendarmes.

## CLARINA.

Oh, sir, on your report depends their liberty! 'Twas but a sudden word—nought else. You would not for so light a cause accuse them?

## CHENILLE.

I was summoned to prevent a duel, and saw enough to know my presence needful. 'Tis the hardest part of duty to speak the truth, when grace and loveliness both bid us hold our tongue. (Bowing to her.) Yet, madam, the truth must be said, *parole d'honneur*. So the captain and lieutenant, be sure of it, march hence to Bîche.

## CLARINA.

May I not go with them?

## CHENILLE.

If the governor be merciful; and when a lady pleads, he has his weakness.

## CLARINA.

I will petition him this instant. Will you bear my letter?

## CHENILLE.

Write, madam, and may persuasion guide the crowquill! The governor shall have the letter from this hand. He shall, *parole d'honneur*.

[Exeunt.

SCENE II.—*A Street.*

*Enter MADAME LA ROSE and POLLY PALIMALL.*

POLLY.

Captain Channel taken to the fortress?

MADAME LA ROSE.

And what's worse, my boarder, Lieutenant Firebrace

POLLY.

Lieutenant Firebrace! Such a noble gentleman.

MADAME LA ROSE.

And the smallest eater, my dear, I ever knew.

POLLY.

And then my foolish brother, Peter; instead of going quietly to his bed last night—to think that he should quarrel about English eggs and chickens with a French gendarmerie, and be locked up, too! And dear Tom Heyday! to stop his parole for not answering muster, and how could he, when he was answering me? I see my end—Madame La Rose, I shall die.

MADAME LA ROSE.

Yes, Ma'am'selle; we all come here on that condition.

POLLY.

Ha! to die a comfortable grandmother in one's own parish is what we must all expect; but to be transplanted like a polyanthus in the bud—to be nipped off—and, instead of an epitaph in one's own mother-tongue, to have an outlandish tombstone that nobody can read!

MADAME LA ROSE.

Be comforted; for I promise, whatever they write on one side the stone, shall be faithfully translated on the other. But early as it is, I've news for you from the fortress.

POLLY.

The fortress? You go in and out of it as if 'twere your own property. What sort of interest have you there?

## MADAME LA ROSE.

The greatest. My husband, Themistocles, makes the governor's pies.

## POLLY.

Dear Tom Heyday ! What news ?

## MADAME LA ROSE.

This from your brother—this from your lover. (*Giving letters.*)

## POLLY.

Now here's a trial for one's feelings ! Brother—lover ! Which shall I open first ?

## MADAME LA ROSE.

Take 'em as we take roasted chesnuts. The coolest first, by all means.

## POLLY.

Bless me ! how confinement spoils one's hand ! Peter always writes like copper-plate, and here all the letters seem in a tangle, (*reals.*) “ Fortress of Verdun, June 1803. My dear Polly,—I scratch you these few lines like a mole under ground. The prison is tolerably strong, but not to be spoken of after Newgate. As for their locks, they haven't one fit for a tea-caddy. The rats at night come in regiments. We're allowed no candle; but we can feel, as they run over our faces, that they must be contemptible in the eyes of Englishmen. I am teaching a spider to dance; but find the spiders here nothing to the spiders in our summer-house at Hornsey. I will write more at length upon what concerns you in my next. Excuse this scrawl: for having no pens, we have been compelled to pluck the magpie. Should you see the Frenchman I quarrelled with, remember your country and don't give up the eggs. Your affectionate brother, Peter Pallmall. P.S. Send me my flute.”

## MADAME LA ROSE.

Pray do. 'Twill be such a consolation to him on his long march.

## POLLY.

Poor Peter ! That's what he calls philosophy : to march to gaol to his own music.

MADAME LA ROSE.

And now for the other! I do so dote upon a love-letter!  
Read, read.

POLLY.

What, my lover's letter? Read that,—to another! Impossible: still, you're such a good creature! I—I tell you what: I'll run it over first myself, and pick you out two or three of the nice bits.

[Retires, reading letter.]

MADAME LA ROSE.

Just like these English girls: they've no real pride in the tender passion. I'm sure when Themistocles used to write to me, I lent his letters to every one of my acquaintance.

[Exit.]

POLLY.

If ever a sheet of letter-paper broke a woman's heart this will break mine. Oh, Tom Heyday! He's going to Biche, and takes leave of me for ever. He says he can't expect me to wait for him, wasting my time till the war's over; so blesses me, sends me a lock of his hair, and tells me to get the best husband I can.

[Remains absorbed in letter.]

*Enter BEAVER.*

BEAVER.

(*Aside.*) Thus far, my plan has prospered to my dearest wish. The father and the lover both removed—patience and cunning, and my suit must thrive.

POLLY.

The best husband! Agonising thought!

BEAVER.

What new sorrow's this?

POLLY.

But I'll follow him. I'll go to Biche too. If I can't get into the fortress, 'twill be some consolation to look at the prison, and know he's safe there.

BEAVER.

In tears, my pretty maid?

POLLY.

(*Reading letter.*) "Get the best husband you can." Yes, it's very easy to say get.

BEAVER.

I fear, some serious news.

POLLY.

"As 'tis the fate of your own Tom to be shut up in a dungeon for life, to grow grey and—and—and mouldy."

BEAVER.

'Tell me, fair mourner, wherefore are you—

POLLY.

Mouldy ! Cupid, god of love, what a condition ! "I send you a lock of my hair." And lovely hair it is too. And this hair to grow grey in a dungeon ! Dear Tom Heyday ! if I'd my smelling bottle at hand I certainly should faint.

BEAVER.

Miss Pallmall, as a friend of your brother's may I be suffered to inquire the source of your affliction ?

POLLY.

(*Putting the letter in her bosom, and bursting into tears.*) Biche !

[*Runs off.*

BEAVER.

The governor, 'tis said, never pardons a duel. Hence, their journey is decided.

*Enter MADAME LA ROSE.*

MADAME LA ROSE.

Oh, sir ! do come to Miss Clarina. Persuade her to stay in Verdun.

BEAVER.

To stay in Verdun ! what hope has she of going hence ?

MADAME LA ROSE.

She vows she'll follow her father—has written to the governor for his consent.

BEAVER.

This must not—shall not be.

MADAME LA ROSE.

Now, sir, you're her father's friend ; so write and persuade him to command her to stop here. Tell him I'll watch over her.

BEAVER.

Nay, I can safely promise that you'll be a mother to her.

MADAME LA ROSE.

A sister, sir, if you please. And say that she can board with me at the most reasonable charge. Tell her so, sir : appeal to her feelings : and above all, don't forget to say that she can have the carnation bedroom, and the butterfly-papered parlour.

BEAVER.

(*Aside.*) Determined to follow him ! My passion rages with opposition. The hopes, the good name of a life, I'll stake upon this cast. I *will* have her.

*Enter CHENILLE with two other Gendarmes.*

CHENILLE.

Monsieur, the governor wants you.

BEAVER.

The governor !

CHENILLE.

Sorry to do this office for an acquaintance ; but duty, Monsieur Beaver, duty. So you must come and be locked up. You must, *parole d'honneur*.

BEAVER.

Locked up ! In what have I transgressed ?

CHENILLE.

The muster-roll. You've been called over thrice this morning, and here you were with—well, it's an honourable weakness : but 'twill take you to Bîche ; it will, *parole d'honneur*.

BEAVER.

To Bîche ?

MADAME LA ROSE.

What's this ? Monsieur to be shut up—what for ?

CHENILLE.

The muster-roll, madame ; the muster-roll.

MADAME LA ROSE.

To lose three boarders in two days ! There'll be an earthquake. But you'll never take the gentleman away ?

CHENILLE.

I must—*parole d'honneur.* [Exeunt; BEAVER guarded.

SCENE III.—*Court-yard of the Fortress of Verdun.*

Enter CHANNEL, followed by FIREBRACE.

CHANNEL.

Will you not leave me, sir ? Will you not avoid me ?

FIREBRACE.

'Though deaf to me,— yet, by the love you bear Clarina ! The fault was mine ; 'twas I who tempted her ; 'twas I who forced her from her duty ; 'twas I who day by day, and hour by hour, assailed her with my prayers—invented subterfuge—coined excuse ; with ceaseless persecution of my suit, compelled, betrayed her into disobedience.

CHANNEL.

And at that time, day by day you sat at my hearth ; and hour by hour you looked in my face. In truth, sir, I never knew so young a man so old a scoundrel.

FIREBRACE.

Sir ! But I have schooled myself to bear your hardest words. All I ask is,—spare Clarina. Could you but know the struggle of her heart—the pain, the suffering of her soul, ere I won from her a wild consent.

CHANNEL.

And wherefore all this ? Wherefore this stolen match—this lying misery ?

FIREBRACE.

Wherefore ? Could I but have hoped your goodness—

## CHANNEL.

Sir, it is the creed of honesty always to hope goodness. But no, sir ; you must be cunning—worldly wise. You must crawl to your purpose like a snake, when you might have won it like a man.

## FIREBRACE.

Oh, sir !

## CHANNEL.

Basil—Lieutenant Firebrace, you will not add to the rigours of this prison—and 'tis said to-morrow we march for one less tolerable—by needless persecution. One moment. Your father was shot at my side. His only words were—“ My wife—my boy—Dick !” he could say no more ; but I knew what he meant. I promised. He heard me, for his face—I see it now amidst the hell that roared about us—brightened as his spirit fled. I promised—

## FIREBRACE.

And nobly, bountifully, fulfilled the pledge. I was a child, but I remember all, sir ; the kindness of your bounty ; your name linked with the widow's blessing ; your name taught me with my daily prayers. Recollect a hundred gifts that made our home less desolate—that smoothed the pathway to a mother's early grave. As at her grave I stood an orphan child, remember how at that dread fall of earth, my young heart sank—remember too the pressure of your hand that told my heart,—“ Courage, poor boy, you are not yet alone.”

## CHANNEL.

Enough, sir—enough.

## FIREBRACE.

Oh, sir, these memories *were* precious to me ; but now, they pain, they humble me. They make me see my meanness, deceit, ingratitude. They call me villain, that in my selfishness I have given one unquiet thought to goodness such as yours. Oh, sir ! by my father—

## CHANNEL.

”Tis of him I'd speak. He died, but with the effort of a dying man, he took this ring from his hand, and placed it where I have worn it till this hour. I received it as a

pledge between us that I should protect his fatherless boy. I have endeavoured to fulfil the pledge ; and now, sir,—

FIREBRACE.

What would you ?

CHANNEL.

I would relieve my eye of all that may remind me of that duty past. Henceforth, sir, we are strangers ; but 'tis fit, sir, you possess your father's ring.

FIREBRACE.

Oh, sir, you will not—cannot—

CHANNEL.

Nay, I am resolute. Here it is, sir—(*Attempting to take it from his finger, but cannot for his emotion*)—here, sir—here—plague on't has grown, I think to me, like other things I fain would cut away—but—you shall have it, sir, you—you shall have it.

[*Exit.*]

FIREBRACE.

Oh, worthy heart ! I have deserved this, that I feared to trust it.

*Enter HEYDAY.*

HEYDAY.

Now, Basil, the evening watch is hard upon us. We must to our work.

FIREBRACE?

What work ?

HEYDAY.

What work ! The work of liberty. Why man, have you slept and forgotten all?—forgotten that, this very night, we're to cut cable ?

FIREBRACE.

To-night ! ay, true.

*Enter BEAVER at the back. He pauses on seeing FIREBRACE and HEYDAY.*

HEYDAY.

Basil ! Overhaul your spirits, man ! What's afloat ? What ails you ?

FIREBRACE.

I have pondered on this business, and come what will, I'll not quit France.

HEYDAY.

Not quit ! What, when the work's done to your hand ? When fifty brave fellows have tricked their keepers—have toiled this month and more—just, as in the nick of luck, our parole is stopped and we've nought to hinder us from giving Jean Crapaud the slip ? The excavation's made, one hour more, and we're outside the fortress.

BEAVER.

(Aside.) Is it so ?

HEYDAY.

And you'll not quit it ? You'll stay, and to-morrow morning be marched to Biche ?

FIREBRACE.

You forget. I leave Clarina in Verdun, and with her—

HEYDAY.

I understand : you fear that fresh-water pirate, Mr. Beaver.

FIREBRACE.

His insolence—nought else. [BEAVER comes down.

,

HEYDAY.

Look there.

FIREBRACE.

Why, 'tis he !

,

HEYDAY.

Invited as I have just heard into the fortress, for missing muster-roll. Now, then, will you go to Biche ?

FIREBRACE.

Have with you, Tom—to the work—to the work ! [Exit.

,

HEYDAY.

And here comes the Jew Boaz. If anything can sweeten the escape, 'tis the money I owe that crocodile. [Retires.

*Enter BOAZ.*

BEAVER.

Come hither. Your losses must be heavy ?

BOAZ.

Heavy ! How I stands upright under 'em I don't know.

BEAVER.

I haye a merchant's feeling for your risks.

BOAZ.

Oh, sir, you'll make me veep ! I never meets with feelings here—I lends and I lends, and I lozes and I lozes—but still I must employ my mind, so I lends and lozes again.

BEAVER.

Should many escape from this prison, your losses—

BOAZ.

Don't speak of it : my heart isn't a stone—it must break.

BEAVER.

Take this to the governor (*having written on a leaf from his pocket-book*). You will be secret ?

BOAZ.

As a money-bag.

BEAVER.

Remember, as yet I must not be known in this. In good time, I may claim consideration of the governor ; but for the present, silence. I will pay your prudence ; and more, you hold that which may hold your debtors.

BOAZ. \*

Den de devil shouldn't tear it from me.

*Enter PALLMALL.*

PALLMALL.

What's that about the devil, Boaz ? Gently—don't abuse an old friend. Mr. Beaver ! they told me you'd come. Happy, sir, to see you among us. We've all sorts of manly games here, from puss-in-the-corner to push-pin. If you like cricket on a small scale, there's a charming court of twelve yards by ten—or, if you have a genius for dominos—

BEAVER.

Well, sir ?

PALLMALL.

You may carve a set out of your own beef-bones—when you get 'em.

HEYDAY.

And to-morrow, 'tis said, we start for Bîche.

BOAZ.

And how am I to be paid my twenty napoleons? How, Mr. Heyday—how? Can you look in my face and—

PALLMALL.

Face! Pooh! Don't call it a face—it's like a bank-note: every line in it means money.

BOAZ.

Well, in all my life—

PALLMALL.

Nonsense! yours isn't a life: die when you will, 'twill only have been a long sneak.

BOAZ.

But I'll have my money, I will! and if not of you, (*aside*) at least I'll make my market of de governor. [Exit.

PALLMALL.

In truth, sir, I'm glad again to see you among us.

BEAVER.

Sir, I acknowledge your hospitality. May I ask you what rendered you worthy of this sudden distinction?

PALLMALL.

Patriotism; a small trump I played—nothing more. A little altercation at the Café Impérial. The talk ran upon omelettes: an impudent Frenchman insisted we couldn't make 'em. In the first place, he aspersed our eggs—slandered them as small. I replied, our eggs were big as pumpkins. This failed to silence him; for he swore that some of the hens in his country laid eggs three times a day. This wouldn't do at all—so for the honour of my native poultry, I made English hens lay four times—with chickens in 'em. That's patriotism, I think?

BEAVER.

And was the gentleman convinced?

## PALLMALL.

No, sir : and that's the strangest part of the story. He immediately cast a very strong reflection upon my veracity, which I instantaneously answered by knocking him down. Now, in France, to knock a man down is to knock a gendarme up : there was a brief inquiry made, and—here I am.

## BEAVER.

And the further trial for your patriotism, Biche ?

## PALLMALL.

We are promised an early march to that rustic retreat. If you're curious in roads, sir, I'm told there's every variety on the way, from flint to quagmire. Look,—here come our brother lambs, driven by the shepherd.

## BEAVER.

Shepherd !

## PALLMALL.

The swain who folds us for the night.

## HEYDAY.

(*Aside to PALLMALL.*) The last night, I hope.

*Enter various prisoners, followed by GAOLER.*

## GAOLER.

To the souterrain, messieurs—to the souterrain. Quick, quick !

## PALLMALL.

Instantly, good monsieur Nightcap. Come along, Tom. (*Aside to HEYDAY.*) I say, I begin to like you. Stone walls draw out the good qualities of a man. Tell me, have you really fobbed that old Jew of twenty napoleons ?

## HEYDAY.

That's true as the north star.

## PALLMALL.

Give me your hand—you shall have sister Polly.

[*All prisoners exeunt, followed by GAOLER.*

**LAST SCENE.** *A Souterrain in the Fortress.* Prisoners seated at a table. Other prisoners coming in and going off at the side. The scene dimly lighted. CHANNEL, FIREBRACE, PALLMALL, and BEAVER on. All the prisoners are singing, and PALLMALL playing his flute, to drown the noise without; which, at intervals, is heard through the chorus.

"Rule, Britannia ! Britannia, rule the waves !  
For Britons never, never shall be slaves."

HEYDAY (*looking in from side*).

Another stave—another, and the stars will twinkle on us.

[*Disappears.*

CHANNEL.

Keep up Britannia, my hearts, though our throats crack !

[*All sing.*

"Rule, Britannia ! Britannia, rule the waves !  
For Britons never, never shall be slaves."

*Re-enter HEYDAY, FOREST, and other prisoners.*

HEYDAY.

The work's done, our cage is open !

FIRST PRISONER.

We've had a rare spell of it, but 'tis done at last.

HEYDAY.

Luckily, the night is black as pitch. When we have swum the moat—

PALLMALL.

What ! must we swim ?

HEYDAY.

Ay, or sink.

PALLMALL.

Oh, I'm enough of a philosopher to know the alternative.

CHANNEL.

Well, lads, what we have groaned, have toiled for, is accomplished. Moments are precious. Are all prepared ?

ALL (*except FIREBRACE and BEAVER*).

All ! all.

FIREBRACE.

May freedom shine upon your paths, and light ye scath-

less to her home, her old abiding-place, her temple and her rock,—England! Farewell.

ALL.

How?

FIREBRACE.

I do not quit the fortress.

FIRST PRISONER.

Wherefore, sir?

FIREBRACE.

It matters not. I am master of my will, accountant solely to myself.

CHANNEL.

Not so, sir. This is no private venture. There is no man here—or should be none—who is not inalienably sworn to dare the common peril of this night.

FIREBRACE.

Sworn?

CHANNEL.

Sir, when men join for freedom, the cause itself doth consecrate the act. To fall from it, or half-way halt in it, is treason to the dignity of human life—is perjury to the first truth of man.

FOREST.

Lieutenant Firebrace, I am no talker: but this much I'll say. To skulk in an enemy's gaol when the enemy might be fought upon the sea, is hardly the act of a true sailor; and if you will, I'll add, of an honest man.

FIREBRACE.

Fear not, sir: you shall have another time for these opinions.

CHANNEL.

Lieutenant Firebrace, will you join us? Or, failing, with some grace of honour, render back your commission to the king?

FIREBRACE.

My life, wrung out by torture first! (*Aside.*) To be thus stung, humiliated! On, gentlemen, I'll lead you!

CHANNEL.

No, sir: as senior officer, that post is mine. Even as runaways we'll keep some discipline.

BEAVER.

Captain Channel, as a civilian, I am excused this trial.

FIREBRACE.

(To CHANNEL, pointing to BEAVER.) If he remain, I stir not.

CHANNEL.

None are excused—none. It is a common cause, and all must bear their part in't.

FIREBRACE.

(Aside to HEYDAY, pointing to BEAVER.) Tom, let him not slip.

HEYDAY.

(Aside to BASIL.) Be sure on't.

CHANNEL.

And now, gentlemen, a sudden farewell with all.

FIREBRACE.

Captain Channel,—

CHANNEL.

Well, sir?

FIREBRACE.

Will you part my enemy?

CHANNEL (going).

The time is urgent, sir.

FIREBRACE.

Oh, think it so. Heaven knows, we ne'er may meet again! For the sake of one you love, part not in anger with me. I have been rash and thankless, but say Farewell, Basil!—let the orphan boy you nourished and protected once more hear your friendly voice, once more grasp your friendly hand. Say, Farewell, Basil—one Farewell!

CHANNEL.

She has cut me to the soul, and—she has deceived her father—but, poor thing!—do you, sir, love her—do you cherish, doat upon her—do you? Farewell, Firebrace, farewell. On!

(All the prisoners are hurrying off, when a party of soldiers, commanded by officer, appear at the opposite door, with presented arms.

OFFICER.

Hold!

## PRISONERS.

Betrayed!

## OFFICER.

- Gentlemen, you mistake the route. This way lies the road to Biche.

CHANNEL (*aside*).

Treason, treason !

## OFFICER.

You have worked well, gentlemen, but have lost your pains. Fall in, and at the word,—march !

*Enter CHENILLE.*

## CHENILLE.

Captain Channel, ere you quit Verdun, the governor would grant a lady's prayer.

*Enter CLARINA and POLLY PALLMALL.*

## CLARINA.

Father! (*Throwing herself in his arms.*) Leave me not unblest—unpardoned.

## CHANNEL.

Farewell, wench ! Thou hast my blessing, my forgiveness.

## CHENILLE.

Stay, Captain ; a letter from the governor.

## CHANNEL.

(Reads.) "To Captain Channel. Sir, Though I am made the gaoler of brave men, I can yet admire their courage. As a soldier, I am glad that the scoundrel who has betrayed ye does not disgrace the uniform of his king. It would, however, have been my duty to consign you and your comrades to the fortress of Biche. I am happy to be the medium of a better fortune. Enclosed is an order for the exchange of yourself and others therein named, received this morning from the minister. VAILLANT, governor of the fortress of Verdun." Here's something more. "As for the traitor Beaver, his destination is"—

## CHENILLE.

(*Passing BEAVER over to the soldiers.*) Biche,—parole d'honneur—Biche.

[BEAVER is immediately marched off.

PALLMALL.

Is my name there? (*Taking paper.*) It is! Then I have friends in London still.

POLLY.

Exchanged! Oh! if I get safe to England, and can only recollect my foreign feelings, won't I write a book! Pray, Captain, I only ask out of humanity, does Mr. Heyday go with us, too?

CHANNEL.

Listen. (*Reads.*) "Thomas Heyday, promoted to lieutenant." So there's a commission to sweeten his voyage with. (*To CLARINA, who is endeavouring to read the paper.*) What! your eyes would devour it! Do you know that name?

CLARINA.

"Basil!" Oh, happiness!

CHANNEL.

More than he deserves. (*Aside.*) I'm glad he has got it, for all that. Basil, you have saved my daughter from a scoundrel, and though you had no such intention—

CLARINA.

Nay, father, did he not best prove it, when *he* married me?

CHANNEL.

Said like a good wife, and therefore prettily said. So, Basil, as you're my son, why die an admiral, and I shall be satisfied.

POLLY.

And now, we're all to go to England!

CHANNEL.

Not all. Though the list's a long one, many stay behind. Therefore, let not those set free, fail in their best wishes for—**THE PRISONER OF WAR.**









